

Good Evening!

Council Members – City Staff and to ALL the Citizens of Willmar.

I am pleased to tell you that the State of our City is good!

The population and labor force are growing at a rapid pace - I would just like to reiterate some of the positive things happening in our City.

Significant 2013 Projects:

Willmar Overhead Door

Kandi Mall tenant spaces

Marcus Construction-YMCA

Somerset, Waters Edge, Eagle Ridge Apartments

Wal-mart Refurb

Mills Auto Center

Torgerson Properties

Heartland Orthopedics

Casey's

Stacy's Nursery-New Greenhouse

Compassionate Care-addition

January-November 2013

Total construction - \$48.7 million vs \$17.1 million for all of last year.

Commercial/Industrial/Institutional - \$43.2 million vs. \$12.3 million in 2012

UPCOMING PROJECTS –of which I cannot divulge^{Information} at this time!

Several Large retail & Industrial Businesses

Restaurant

Mall expansion

MinnWest – Possible Charter School & other new tenants

Brew & Pub

Rice Care Center

MnDot-Expansion & Others

**AND WE CANNOT FORGET THE OVERLAY PROJECT
ON EAST HWY 12 AND THE LAKELAND DRIVE
PROJECT.**

Retail Sales – Est.

-\$650 million – City of Willmar

Unemployment – City

-4% in October 2013

Labor Force

**-October 2013-25,000 (more than city population, coming in
from other areas.)**

-2008-23,000 (State Demographer

Population

-2010 – 19,610

-2013 – estimated to be 20,300 – up 4%

Income

**-Median family - \$49,512 in 2010 – now over \$50,000 and 30th
out of 87 counties.**

I feel we have accomplished many things: 2 of the 3 quiet zones are being completed, and the airport land issues are mostly resolved and moving forward.

As always, I will be up front and candid with you – things have not always gone smoothly and it is no secret that we have some struggles. I promised transparency and that is what I have tried to give you – and it is my intention to work hard to get everyone back on the same page AND to do what is best for our City.

Our charter establishes a strong City Council, a Weak Mayor and a city administration which has no discretionary authority other than what has been articulated to them by the city council.

Simple? YES - BUT every element of our governing misses out and doesn't follow these simple precepts – AND of course, the result is some of the problems we are experiencing at this time. We have non-elected people trying to run the city without the information that the Council has.

My role of representing the city DOESN'T – DOES NOT by Charter include management authority, however my oversight and budget setting responsibilities raises the need for me to speak out.

I have found that unfortunately the past mindset of some Council members, local critics and the local newspaper have discouraged discussion of issues in Council, particularly those with alternative options. It seems that in the past things appear to have been “worked out” prior to the meetings instead of in the public eye, and I feel it is in the best interest of our taxpayers to know how and why certain

decisions are made and how their tax dollars are being spent.

The Council needs to be more involved with what is going on in our community. Administration has not been as “open” as needed – I want to encourage staff recommendations, but it is the Councils responsibility to question those recommendations, look for ways to lower costs and eliminate duplicate services. Our professionals are the most knowledgeable about where these opportunities exist.

In summary, I intend to speak out more when I feel Council needs to provide direction to Administration and encourage involvement of both the Council and me at earlier stages than it has done in the past.

Again – working together, rather than as competitors will serve Willmar much better and will benefit the taxpayers.

Although we have some issues to work on, our city is in good hands.

Thank you and God Bless.

Frank Yonish

Mayor - City of Willmar